

REMARKS

The specification and drawing amendments effect minor corrections to the application as originally filed. None of the changes reflected in those amendments introduces new matter.

Claims 2, 3, and 11 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and the remaining claims have each been amended. Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly recite the subject matter that the applicants regard as their invention, and the dependent claims have each been amended for clarification purposes.

Claims 1 through 4, 8, 9, and 11 through 14 were rejected as anticipated by the Beneton et al. '118 reference. Beneton et al. shows a clutch and mentions prestressing of a diaphragm spring in paragraph [0080], but it does not teach or suggest the mounting of a diaphragm spring on a pressure plate and in an elastically deformed condition, as is claimed in amended claim 1. In contrast with the invention as claimed, Beneton et al. shows diaphragm spring 188 spaced from pressure plates 180 and 179 and shows diaphragm spring 194 as merely resting against pressure plate 180, but not mounted on it. Moreover, as recited in amended claim 1, the diaphragm spring is in elastically deformed condition before the clutch is installed in a power train, a matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested by that reference. Accordingly, Beneton et al. neither shows nor suggests the clutch structure as claimed in amended claim 1, and it therefore does not anticipate it.

The remaining claims all depend from claim 1, either directly or

indirectly, and therefore claims 4, 8, 9, and 11 through 14 that were also rejected as anticipated by Beneton et al. are patentably distinguishable over the Beneton et al. reference for the same reasons as are given above with respect to amended claim 1. Furthermore, those dependent claims recite additional structural and functional features to further distinguish the subject matter recited in those claims from the reference relied upon.

Claims 5 through 7 were rejected as obvious based upon the combination of Beneton et al. and Després '771. The latter reference was cited for showing rivets for deforming a diaphragm spring. However, as was the case with Beneton et al., Després does not teach mounting a diaphragm spring in on a pressure plate in elastically deformed condition so that it is in a continuously deformed condition before the clutch is installed and put to use. Neither of Després Figures 17 or 18 show a structure such as that claimed in amended claim 1. Accordingly, claims 5 through 7 are not obvious from the Beneton et al. and Després references.

Claims 15 through 20 were rejected as obvious based upon the combination of Beneton et al., Després, and the Maucher '818 reference. The latter was cited for showing a wear compensation arrangement. However, the Maucher reference also does not show or suggest the structure as claimed in amended claim 1, from which each of claims 15 through 20 depends, either directly or indirectly. Thus, the combination of Beneton et al., Després, and Maucher does not show or suggest the invention as claimed.

Based upon the foregoing amendments and remarks, the claims as they now stand in the application are believed clearly to be in allowable form in that they patentably distinguish over the disclosures contained in the references that were cited and relied upon by the examiner, whether those references be considered in the context of 35 U.S.C. § 102 or of 35 U.S.C. § 103. Consequently, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and reconsideration and reexamination of the application is respectfully requested with a view toward the issuance of an early Notice of Allowance.

The examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorney if this amendment raises any questions, so that any such question can be quickly resolved in order that the present application can proceed toward allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alfred J. Mangels', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Alfred J. Mangels
Reg. No. 22,605
4729 Cornell Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45241
Tel.: (513) 469-0470

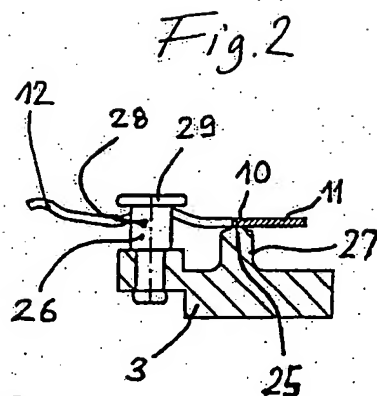
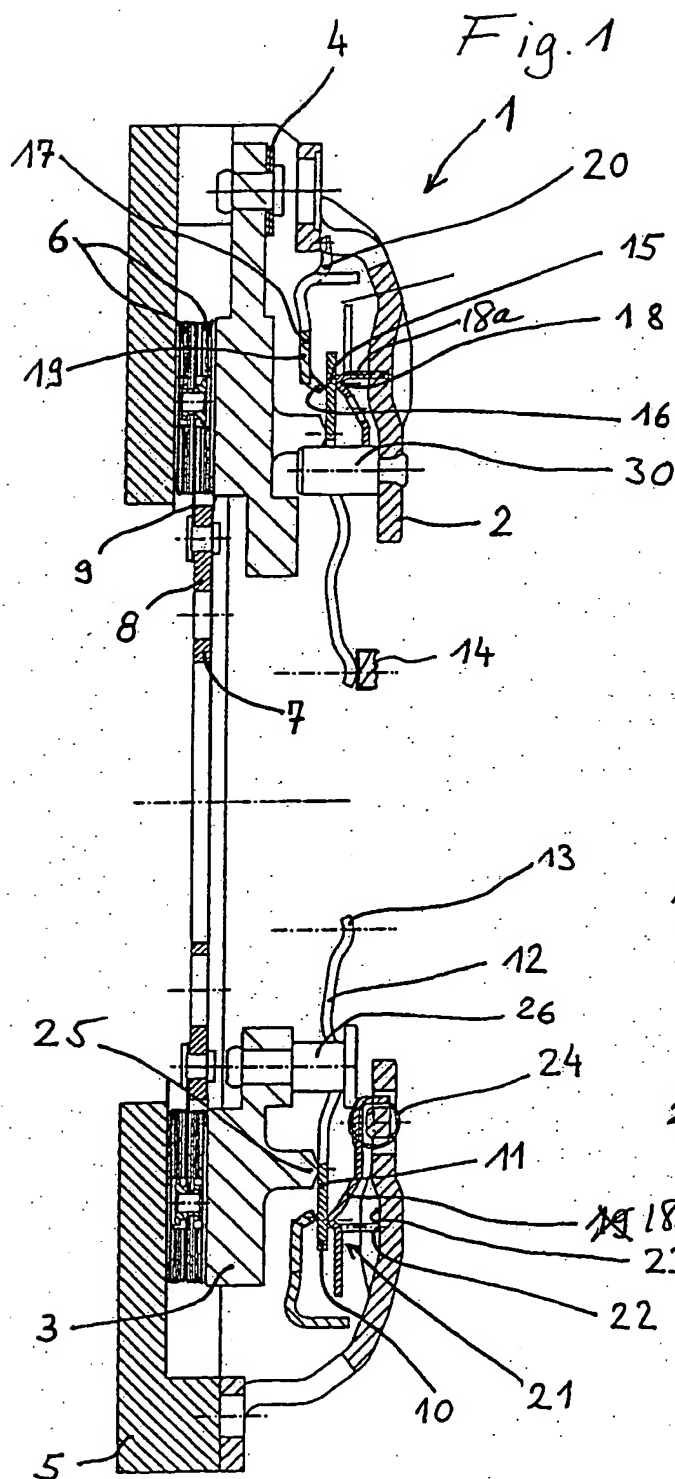
January 20, 2006

Attachments: Annotated drawing sheets showing the changes
Replacement formal drawing sheets including the changes

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The sheets of drawings appended hereto include marked-up copies of originally-filed Figures 1 and 13 showing proposed changes in red. The proposed changes to Figure 1 involve the addition of reference numeral 18a in the upper half of the figure, and the substitution of reference numeral 18a for reference numeral 19 in the lower half of the figure. The changes to Figure 13 involve the addition of lead lines to reference numerals 801 and 802.

Further, a complete set of the drawings in formal form, designated as "REPLACEMENT SHEETS," and including the proposed changes identified above are also appended hereto. Approval of the changes and entry of the REPLACEMENT SHEETS and their substitution for the originally-filed drawings is respectfully requested.



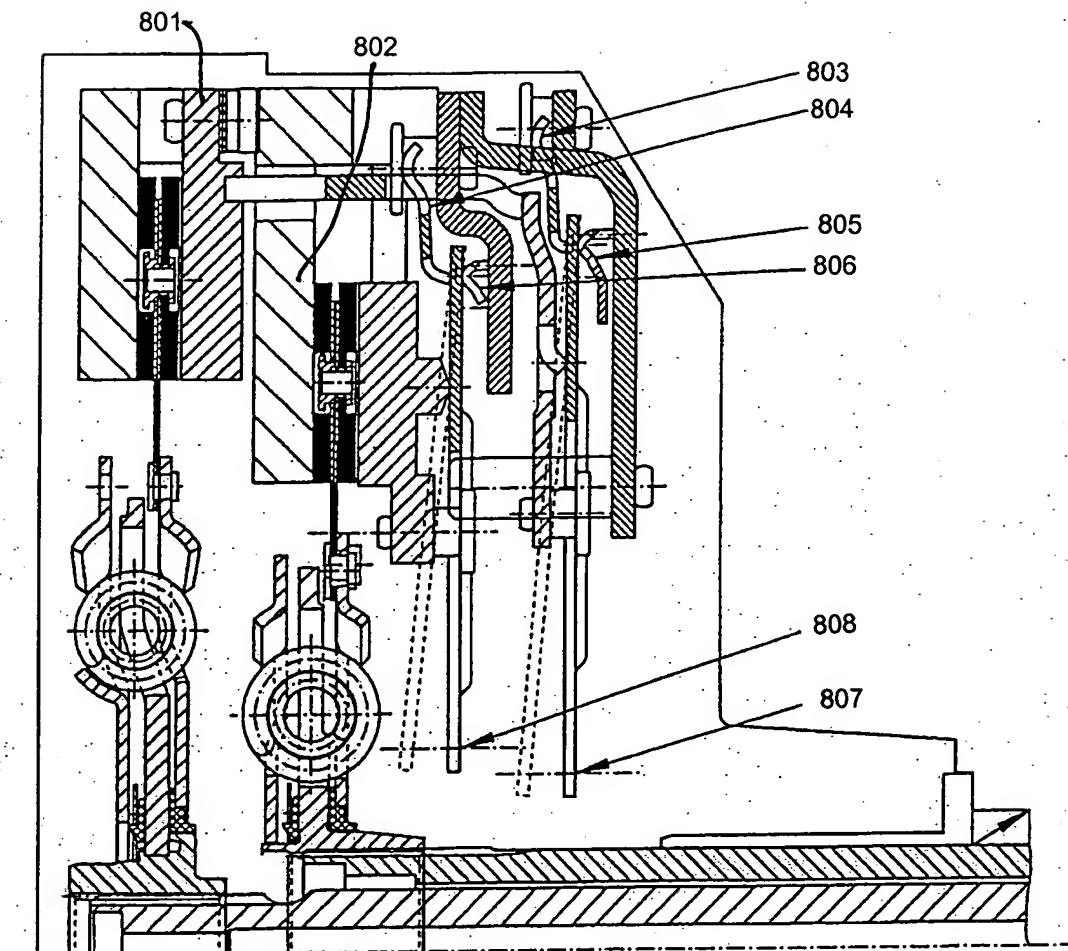


Fig. 13